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ART AND PROGRESS

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JOHN LA FARGE

A man's influence is not always measured by his work. The work of John La Farge has great distinction, but it was what Mr. La Farge was, rather than what he did, that gave his life significance and value. We owe much—more than perhaps we commonly realize—to the men of visions, those dwellers on the heights who see farther and more clearly than the toilers in the valley. Of these was Mr. La Farge—a man of high ideals and aspirations; one who was continually looking beyond, believing and hoping. He was, however, at the same time a man of action—a profound student, a master-craftsman, an artist. To no work that he undertook did he begrudge effort,

and never did a piece of work leave his hands that was not at the time of its completion as good as he could make it.

The incidents of his life are well known and need be but briefly mentioned. First the student days in Paris when he approached art, not with the bold self-confidence of the average student, but with the reverent inquisitiveness of the scholar; then the return to America; the fellowship with William Morris Hunt; the years in Newport; the decoration of Trinity Church, Boston, which opened a new epoch in art; the journey to the East; the experimenting with colored glass which met with such wonderful result; and lastly the writing, the lecturing, the mural painting and designing of the later years.

When the record is written it seems hard to believe that so much could have been encompassed in one life which did not greatly exceed in length the allotted "three score years and ten." And the fact is that Mr. La Farge's work was much interrupted by ill health and that he produced with great deliberation. The secret lay, perhaps, in singleness of purpose. He created for himself a world of his own and dwelt therein, distracted only now and then by the world outside as one is occasionally obliged to note the elements by the severity of a storm. He possessed in large measure what is set down as artistic temperament, which is after all nothing more than unusual sensitiveness to beauty and consciousness of the finer things of life. Color meant much to him, and his works manifest the joy he found in it. Subjective interest, furthermore, he never scorned. To him literature and art were indeed sisters. His mural paintings are decorative, but they are primarily pictures. So, also, for the most part, are his stained-glass windows. One need not mention particular works, they are all familiar, but as demonstrating his versatility one may point to the sanctuary painting in the Church of the Ascension, New York; to the window in Harvard Chapel at Southwark Cathedral; the landscape "Paradise Valley" in private ownership, but frequently exhibited; and to the paintings

made in the Sandwich Islands and Japan. With the spirit of Eastern art, Mr. La Farge found close kinship, and doubtless this in itself proved a bond of union between him and Robert Louis Stevenson, who was counted among his friends. But despite, or more probably on account of, this sympathy with Oriental art, upbuilt upon a profound knowledge and respect for the art of Europe, his own art was national in expression as the artist himself was frankly an American, although in the truest sense a citizen of the world.

It was because of this breadth of vision, coupled with steadfastness of purpose, that the influence of John La Farge reached beyond the area of his accomplishment, and it was because his sympathies were likewise far-reaching that he himself was understood. The hope of American art is in continuing and perpetuating such traditions.

NOTES

THE
FEDERATION'S
TRAVELING
EXHIBITIONS

In October the American Federation of Arts sent out an exhibition of original work by American illustrators to make

a circuit of cities west of the Alleghany mountains. This exhibition opened in Pittsburgh where, during the two weeks it was on view, it was visited by 8,000 persons and nine sales were made. It is now in Cincinnati from whence it goes to Indianapolis. Upon being returned in May it will probably be exhibited in New York under the auspices of the Society of Illustrators.

In November an exhibition of forty paintings, chiefly assembled from an exhibition set forth during the summer and fall in Buffalo and St. Louis, was sent by the Federation to Fort Worth, Texas, and on a southern circuit. In Fort Worth it is being shown in the Public Library under the auspices of the Fort Worth Art Association; in San Antonio it will be set forth in the Carnegie Library under the charge of the Woman's Club; in Houston it will be shown in the

new Cotton Exchange Building under the auspices of the Public School Art League; and in Austin, if arrangements are consummated, in the Senate Chamber of the handsome new State Capitol. From Texas it goes to New Orleans and from New Orleans to Savannah. The collection comprises works by Thomas Anshutz, Cecilia Beaux, Radcliffe College having lent the portrait of Miss Irwin; Louis Betts, W. Gedney Bunce, Bruce Crane, Leon Dabo, Daniel Garber, Childe Hassam, C. W. Hawthorne, Robert Henri, Henry Salem Hubbell, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Walter McEwen, Maxfield Parrish, Horatio Walker, Robert Reid, John C. Johansen, E. W. Redfield and others.

To San Francisco, the Federation has sent an exhibition of elementary school work by children in the public schools of several of the States, which was assembled by Mr. Henry Turner Bailey for the Alaska Yukon Exposition. By the first of January it will have in readiness to send out an exhibition of representative student work done in the following schools: The Pennsylvania Academy, Pratt Institute, Rhode Island School of Design, Pennsylvania School of Industrial Art, and Cooper Union. The exhibits include works in color and black and white from draped models, still life, in illustration and design, uniformly mounted on gray board 22 by 28 inches in dimension.

Furthermore, the National Society of Mural Painters and the National Sculpture Society, both of which are chapters of the Federation, have undertaken to assemble for circulation exhibitions of large-size photographs of notable works in mural paintings and sculpture, each of which will comprise from one hundred to one hundred and fifty examples. These photographs will either be lightly framed without glass or unframed in order to be readily transported.

An exhibition of water colors, seventy-five or one hundred in number, by the foremost American water colorists is also to be assembled and sent out by the Federation.

These exhibitions are assembled and